

# SPEAK

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AUG 1990

1990

R1.00

No. 28



**● WOMEN'S LIBERATION  
MUST BE PART OF A NEW SOUTH AFRICA**



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Cover photo: Afrapix

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SPEAK Collective members are: Gill, Helen, Jacqueline, Karen, Nise, Phumelele, Shamim and Vanessa. We welcome Gill as a new SPEAK employee.

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Dear SPEAK

I have some few comments about the homelands unrest. The unrest is caused by the homeland leaders because they do not negotiate with their people. If the homeland leaders can sit with their people and listen to their grievances or complaints I think there will be no unrest in the homelands.

For example, people want to air their grievances and leaders stop them from laying their complaints. I want to know if there is any remedy to stop this unrest? Why do homeland leaders depend on police and soldiers? Why can't they solve their problems without the help of the police and soldiers? This causes problems as police use arms to control the unrest and this causes more trouble because the police and soldiers use arms against people who have got no arms or weapons.

What I want to be clear of : are these homelands outside of South Africa or not? I want to know why South Africa wants to interfere in the homelands, for example, when Bophuthatswana is in trouble they call help from South Africa. Please South Africa do not interfere in the homelands.

Khulumani Makhosikazi

Amandla!

Alexandra Township, Johannesburg

Dear friend, thank you for your letter. This unrest is a problem that is affecting homeland and South African townships alike. They should not have to rely on police and soldiers. The government created a monster of 'separate development' with unpopular homeland leaders. Now the homeland leaders are facing uprisings against them. The same is happening with the councillors in the townships. We agree with you - the problem will only be solved when the homeland leaders sit down with the people and listen to their demands. And when there is one South Africa with leaders who are accountable to the people who elected them. We have to organise and fight for this in order to create a new, just South Africa.

Dear SPEAK

SPEAK is excellent. SPEAK is of a high standard. SPEAK is eventful. SPEAK is an eye-opener. I wish that everybody reads it. I was so inspired that I immediately developed an idea of writing this special poem for it.

**SPEAK!**

Speak African woman speak!  
Speak louder than they speak  
For the nation you the seed  
From which children must feed.

Speak now African woman!  
Await not a shivering man  
Cow dung time long has gone  
So your commitment be borne.

Speak experiences on marriage  
What a feeling during miscarriage  
More blood wasted during struggle  
More bones crushed during struggle.

Speak! You've seen the light  
Speak of all the women's plight  
Speak and fight for your right  
Speak the struggle to win the fight.

Speak the land of plenty  
Speak the language of beauty  
One voice of labourhood!  
One voice of neighbourhood!

Speak the joy you received  
The first night you conceived  
That product of your pride  
These children must not die!

Spoken the children of yesterday  
Speak the children of today  
Speak the children of tomorrow  
Speak the roots of their sorrow.

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Speak the orphans of education  
You the orchard of new brains  
Speak the problems of detention  
You the cloud of healthy rains!

Speak no shame African woman  
You're no shadows of any man  
But part of the on-going process  
That can help shape our progress.

Speak the voices of the Makebas  
Beyond the mountains they sing!  
Speak the sounds of the Mbulis  
Sounds in our memory they ring!

Speak the comfort and warmth  
Fruit tree for children's growth  
Be that tree of strongest root  
That everyone should eat its fruit.

Speak African woman, speak!  
That tongue of motherhood, speak!  
The pain of labourhood, speak!  
That cause of widowhood, speak!

Speak African girl, speak!  
Speak African dame, speak!  
Speak African daughter, speak!  
Speak African woman, speak!  
*by Luvuyo Don Garcia Nontenja*

Dear Luvuyo, we are glad that you feel inspired by SPEAK. We look forward to more readers sending letters and poems.

Dear SPEAK

We have formed a new organisation called the Duduza women's forum. Can you advertise this in your magazine so that we can be invited by other women's organisations to share ideas. Please can you send us SPEAK magazine, as we will sell them for you to our comrades. Yours in struggle

Comrade Kuki Mlangeni  
3639 Letsapa Street, Duduza, Nigel, 1490.

Dear Kuki, thank you for your letter. We hope that many women's groups will contact you. Forward with the women's struggle!

***Share your ideas ! Write to: SPEAK,  
P.O.Box 45213, Mayfair, 2018, South  
Africa. Make your voice heard!***



# WE WANT PEOPLE'S EDUCATION



Soweto and Alexandra students on the march. They handed over a memorandum to Piet Struwig, Department of Education (DET) regional director. In it they demanded stationery and textbooks, more schools, laboratories and libraries, enough furniture, and one teacher for every 25 students. They also want all white schools that are under-used or unused to be opened to black students. March, 1990.

Photo: Afrapix

**"We want people's education,"** said a group of students that SPEAK met at Fumana High School in Katlehong, on the East Rand.

**"What does people's education mean for you?"** we asked. They answered:

**"Education for the people to be able to govern themselves. Education for all."**

SPEAK

**People's education - not capitalist education**  
Students felt strongly opposed to the capitalist ideology that is promoted in schools.

Christopher spoke about this. He said: "Our education system stresses capitalism as a good system. Communism and socialism are hardly explained. At school they teach you to be



ignorant, ambitious and forget about everything. Just think about your future - having a big car, a big house and maybe having children, a boy and a girl, and being a doctor. Forget about the people with whom you are living and forget about what is right and wrong. Maybe in a post-apartheid land we'll not be dealing with capitalism, but we will be dealing with socialism. Capitalism will be crushed. We want to have information about our syllabuses so that we can select what is good and right. A person must be able to judge for himself what is good and what is bad."

### **People's education means democracy**

The students felt that they must have a say in the running of the school. One of the ways in which to get students' voices heard is through getting rid of Parent Teachers Associations (PTA), and having Parent, Teacher, Student Associations (PTSA). Christopher spoke about this. "We'd like to see an organisation which includes the people who form this school. This school is formed by parents, teachers and students. How are they going to solve the problems without us? The Management Council was introduced by the DET as a strategy to suppress the views of the students."

### **People's education means an end to puppet teachers**

"We have some white teachers who are puppets of the government. Some of them are here to make sure that the students are oppressed. After that they go to get promotions there by the government," said Bethuel. The students are not opposed to white teachers in principle. As Christopher said: "We are not against having whites or any colour because we are for a future democratic South Africa which will belong to all people."

But the students are against the behaviour of some of the white teachers at their school who have taken over the school library as a staff room, instead of sharing a staffroom with the other black teachers. "Where are we supposed to study?" asked the students.

Some of the teachers do not recognise the SRC, they claim that SRC's are political organisations.

### **The present problems must stop**

Students felt that they face many problems in the schools, like overcrowded classrooms and a shortage of teachers. They complained bitterly about overcrowding in the classrooms. Christopher said: "The buildings don't accommodate us. There are about 68 pupils in a classroom. You find that some lose interest in their studies because they can't learn when others make a noise." Christopher said: "There is a problem of shortage of teachers. Students are just roaming around here making a lot of noise because if there are no teachers students don't stay in the classroom. Also we have to share the books that DET gives us because there are not enough."

### **Sexual harassment of women students must stop**

Women students face sexual harassment from male teachers and from male students. The students feel that this must be taken up and stopped. Male teachers use their power and status over women students. Monica said: "The male teachers harass the female students. If they come to class and get attracted to a woman student, the teacher won't teach, but is just there to see that particular person. After school he will tell her to come and see him so that he can speak to her and talk to her."

Bethuel added: "The male teachers are intimidating the female students. If she refuses to fall in love with him he will start to attack her indirectly and even directly. Even in class, immediately she does anything he will harass her, until maybe she will even run away from school."

The students are working out ways to deal with this problem. Moses said: "If teachers, students and parents are involved in running the school, some of these things will stop." Bethuel added: "Since we have established the SRC the harassment has started to decrease. The SRC voices these things. So now some of the teachers are scared of doing such things. But they still exist. We believe that through organisation we can be strong, because we believe that every student is an SRC member."

Some male comrades harass women





**"Forward with the struggle for a non-racist, non-sexist, democratic education!" said the students from Katilehong.**

Photo: SPEAK

comrades. The students felt that this needs to be addressed organisationally, and through building an alternative culture. Christopher said: "We do have education officers who are teaching members of the organisation about women's exploitation and how he must behave towards women in the struggle. If maybe there is a total change of culture and socialisation, that exploitation of women by men can be eradicated."

### **The problem of teenage pregnancies**

Many young women students fall pregnant. The students expressed concern about this problem. Bethuel said: "A student who falls pregnant is forced to leave for a year. It is time that can never be regained. When she comes back she finds that her friends have gone forward with their education. Taking maternity leave is quite a problem. She stays in the location not doing anything there - maybe getting into something criminal in the location. Because she probably feels lonely there. She may decide to use drugs or to drink liquor or something like that."

Moses spoke about the added problem of

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DET's restrictions. "If you do your standard ten and you fail you might not be able to come back to school. A female student who falls pregnant and is away for nine months could fail and then she is affected by these restrictions," he said.

Pregnant women students also face being laughed at and talked about by the other students, which can make the situation unbearable for her.

### **The need for sex education**

The students felt that sex education should be introduced into the school syllabus. Bethuel said: "We want to learn about how to behave when we reach a stage like adolescence. What must we do when a male comrade is proposing love to a female comrade? How must she respond? How can students protect themselves from pregnancy?"

The students felt that sex education at school is important because often parents ignore the situation, and sometimes they feel they cannot explain things like relationships, menstruation, cervical cancer sex, and prevention. The students also felt that issues like AIDs should be explained to them.

### **Attitudes that hold back the struggle**

Women students face problems with their parents not wanting them to attend meetings. As Monica put it: "If a woman comrade says to her mother 'Mama, I am going to a meeting and it will start at 4 o'clock.' She will ask you when you will be home. You can say maybe at 6 o'clock. She will tell you: 'Hau! You are not going to a meeting today, you must wash and do everything in the house so you cannot have time to be in the meeting.' That is why women remain behind in the struggle."

Christopher said: "Ja, there is a belief that men are always at the forefront so the struggle is for men only. But we believe that a nation cannot be free unless its own women are free. If women are free then the nation can be free. Sometimes when the female comrade wants to attend a meeting she'll be afraid that her parents will harass or scold her. Those things do leave her out from the struggle. Those problems are not just the problems of



individuals, but they are national problems. Some parents even try to stop male comrades from going to meetings.”

### **A need for discipline**

Sometimes problems with women's participation in the struggle happens because of love relationships between the students. Bethuel said: "I think that the exploitation of female comrades by male comrades who are lovers is somehow crippling the struggle. If there is a problem in the relationship, they won't come to meetings, not wanting to see that particular person. I think that it is alienating a number of the female comrades in our struggle. What can be done? I think that maybe we must just call on the parents organisations, civic associations and workers organisations like COSATU to educate parents to let their children join the struggle irrespective of sex. And tell the male comrades not to harass the female comrades. If they ever do they must be disciplined."

### **Building non-sexist organisations**

The students say they are against discrimination. From each class in their school

one female and one male student is elected onto the SRC. At the executive level, it is people elected by the students. They say that in their school the SRC is made up of an equal number of female and male students. At local and national youth organisation level, there is a women's forum. But this is not yet represented in the national structure. They are trying to make sure that this happens.

### **Away with the old, and build the new**

The students believe that through organisation they can achieve a lot. They can start to build a society that is free of exploitation and oppression of any kind. They want an end to oppressive education, an end to police harassment, and an end to corporal punishment. They have a vision of building democratic structures in the school, building unity with parents and progressive teachers, and fighting sexist practices. 1990 is still new, but there has already been mass action in different parts of the country by both students and teachers who are militantly fighting for their rights.

Forward to education for the people!



**More and more teachers are joining the fight for decent working conditions in the schools. Here teachers from Durban take to the streets in March 1990.**

Photo: Afrapix



# COSATU Workers' Charter campaign

*COSATU has started a campaign to draw up a Workers' Charter. The charter will outline the needs and rights of workers. Women workers' demands will be included in the charter.*

## **Workers rights in a future South Africa**

The ANC's Constitutional Guidelines talk about including a Workers' Charter in a constitution for a free S.A. Two Charters on workers rights have been drafted during the past year, one by the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) and one by the South African Communist Party (SACP). COSATU also believes that workers needs and rights must be included in a new constitution for S.A. This is why a decision to launch a charter campaign was made at the COSATU Congress last year. The campaign aims to ensure that workers' demands are in the forefront. It aims to collect workers' demands through a questionnaire. The questionnaire was drafted at a special COSATU National Education Committee meeting. The questionnaire has been sent to COSATU's affiliates for comment. COSATU plans to adopt the charter at a Special Congress late in 1990. SPEAK spoke to three union women who are involved in the Workers' Charter campaign, Comrade Sibongile Bongwe from the Transport and General Workers' Union (T&GWU), and Comrades Dorothy Mogkalo and Maggie Magubane from the National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa (NUMSA).

## **A very important campaign**

They told us that the Workers' Charter campaign is a very important campaign. They said: "Without a worker charter in a new South



Africa, we won't have a say. We need clauses, like the right to strike. A Workers' Charter must be drafted by COSATU and all the non-affiliated unions. The Congress in September will debate the recommendations that come forward." The questionnaire to collect demands for the Charter has a section for discussion about women's demands. "As women," Sibongile said, "We are part and parcel of the working class."

## **Women's demands must be included**

"We believe that women workers must be given a chance to debate their problems so that they will be armed with demands to be incorporated into the worker charter," they said. The COSATU questionnaire has a section called Women Workers' Rights. And this includes questions on wages, grading, education, training, taxation, sexual harassment, and contraception. There are also questions asking workers how they think trade unions, worker political parties, mass organisations, employers and the state can end the unequal position of women. And how it can be ensured that all workers have equal rights and equal opportunities regardless of race, sex and creed.

The women comrades said that the drawing up of a Worker Charter should not be seen as ignoring the Freedom Charter, the other Workers' Charters or the Women's Charter that was drawn up by the Federation of South



African Women (Fedsaw) in the 1950's. The COSATU Worker Charter campaign is an attempt to get the demands that workers in South Africa today want included in the constitution for a post apartheid South Africa. The women comrades we talked to felt that the following should be included in the women's demands:

- \* Workers should have parental rights.
- \* Women should have the right to challenge and defend themselves against sexual and racial discrimination.
- \* Men should not beat women.
- \* Men must share in the work in the home.
- \* There should be a law against men having more than one wife.

### **SACP and SACTU Workers' Charters**

The SACP and SACTU drew up draft Workers' Charters last year.

The SACP charter has a section on women's rights. The SACP charter says that there will be no discrimination against women in the kinds of jobs they do, in wages, working conditions, training, or benefits. Positive steps shall be taken to deal with discrimination suffered by women in the workplace and the home. Women will be given the chance to be trained for jobs outside the home.

The government, trade unions, political parties, and all other mass organisations shall ensure that women participate at leadership and all levels, and all forms of male chauvinism shall be fought both inside and outside the home. On the rights of all workers and the running of the economy, the SACP Charter says:

- \* *wealth must be redistributed for the benefit of all*
- \* *the state shall control the economy, white monopoly of ownership and managerial control shall be broken*
- \* *the interests of workers and the nation as a whole shall be safeguarded*
- \* *state control should not be overcentralised*
- \* *the union movement should be free of state control and have the right to strike*
- \* *unions will be consulted in the drawing up of laws affecting collective bargaining and other labour laws*
- \* *all adults will have right to work, a minimum wage will be set down, and the migrant labour system phased out.*
- \* *companies will assist in providing recreational and primary health care facilities,*
- \* *positive steps will be taken to correct discrimination against women at the workplace*
- \* *moves will be made to break the existing media monopoly and ensure worker access to media.*



**Women workers from the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union (CWIU) discuss what demands they as women would like to see included in the workers' charter.**

Photo: SPEAK



# ***Women's liberation must be part of a new South Africa!***

We are living in exciting times. ANC rallies and meetings are being held all over the country. ANC leaders released from years of imprisonment are working at setting up the ANC inside the country. The ANC has set up a national office and is talking of setting up branches. The national ANC conference will be held inside South Africa for the first time in over thirty years in December 1990. There is talk of ANC leaders from Lusaka coming to South Africa after years of exile to have talks about talks with the South African government.

These things have been happening very fast and there are many issues that need discussion. Organisations and groupings have started discussing what the unbanning of the ANC will mean. Will civic organisations continue to exist? Will women's organisations continue to exist? What about the UDF?

All the people of this country need to be part of asking and answering these questions. And women, who are often left out of political discussion, need to be part of these discussions at all levels.

## **Women in a new South Africa**

A number of meetings in March 1990 focused on the involvement of women in the new South Africa. At a national women's workshop in Durban a decision was taken by UDF and COSATU women to set up a national women's organisation in three months time. Women in South Africa are on the move!

Many interesting and important things were said at these meetings about women's role both now and in a post-apartheid South Africa.

## **Women must be informed**

Comrade Walter Sisulu spoke to women at a conference of the Federation of Transvaal Women in Johannesburg in March 1990. He said that women must make sure they are informed about current happenings. He said: "We are at a critical stage of our struggle. You have to put your shoulder to the wheel. It is necessary for you to know the Harare Document. You must know the reasons why it was adopted. You must know why you must support it. The Harare Declaration came from the ANC. It emerged as the instrument of negotiating, talking, and of liberation. You must study it, talk about it, support it."

Comrade Sisulu went on to say: "In the building of the ANC today under legal conditions women must stand up. We are now in greater danger than in the past because the nearer freedom comes the greater the difficulties. The situation we are in at present is a greater crisis than the past crisis."

## **Fighting sexism**

At an International Women's Day meeting on March 8 in Johannesburg, women speakers spoke with a fighting spirit about the part women must play in the present and future South Africa. Speaker after speaker made the point that women must be seen on the



executives of the organisations that are bringing the new South Africa into being.

"It is your job as women to see that women are going to be recognised in the new South Africa," said Helen Joseph at this meeting, "We want to see women as one half of the national executive of the ANC, as half the executive of the UDF, as half the executive of the MDM. That is where our place is and that is where we must go."

### **Women's voices must be heard**

Judith Howadeen of the Black Sash said: "As women of South Africa we can be proud of our tradition of resistance. But the time has come to look forward. We must make sure that our voices are heard in the development of a new constitution. We must participate fully in the laws governing our rights. We must make sure we end the present situation where it is men who make all the laws. We, the women of South Africa, should challenge the ANC leadership to include women to play a pivotal role. We must continue to inform and educate ourselves so that we know what demands to make."

Sister Bernard said at this meeting, "Women must be present at the negotiating table. The

ANC must be asked what is happening to a non-sexist South Africa. It is not the men who are going to make it happen for us. It is us who are going to make it happen, not only for us but also for them. Plunge, swim and get to that liberated South Africa."

### **National women's workshop**

A national women's workshop was held in Durban in March 1990. Women from UDF affiliated regional women's organisations such as United Women's Congress (UWCO), Natal Organisation of Women (NOW), FEDTRAW, and UDF women from Eastern Cape, Free State, Border, Transkei, Northern Transvaal, and Natal Midlands met with COSATU women. They met to discuss women's organisation in South Africa today. The workshop decided to form a national women's organisation. This organisation will be made up of women from COSATU and from the UDF affiliated regional women's groups. A national interim committee was set up to work towards a national conference. After the conference the organisation will be launched publically.

### **One unified, loud voice**

The workshop agreed that women must be



**Women together are strong!**  
**FEDTRAW women at their conference in Johannesburg in March 1990.**

Photo: Dynamic Images





**Members of COSATU's executive. Women have to ensure that they are represented at all levels of organisations.**

Photo: Afrapix

organised and that women's organisation will be advanced significantly through a national women's organisation. Firoza Adam, a FEDTRAW delegate at this national workshop, said: "It is important for us now to unite women from all walks of life committed to a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic South Africa. Otherwise we could find ourselves in the same position as many other women from other countries found themselves in the post liberation era. After having struggled together with their men for liberation, women comrades still found themselves in a situation where the position of women had not changed. We need to assert our position as women more strongly now than before and we can only do that effectively as one unified loud voice."

Women at this workshop also saw the need to

be involved in discussion on key issues of our time. A delegate said: "We need to discuss the Constitutional Guidelines and take affirmative action to ensure that we participate in all the negotiation processes so that the issue of women's liberation and women's rights are firmly part of the programme of a new south Africa."

### **Women in Organisation**

UDF women from the different regions reported on the work they were doing to organise women. COSATU women talked about their work in organising women workers. The women also talked about how they saw the oppression of women. It was agreed that women's oppression is rooted in our society. It is part of women's daily lives, in the community, at work, in schools. Women do not have time to belong to organisations. In our homes and schools women are taught that their place is in the home. It was felt that women's organisations are changing the role between men and women, but that male comrades are often guilty of sexism. The women said that men need to be educated around these issues. Now was the time to focus on women's demands. The women's charter drawn up in 1954 was seen as still being relevant today. This charter could be expanded for today's needs. It was felt that women need a Charter that is not going to push them back to the kitchen. It was seen as an ongoing task to fight for women to have equal roles with men in South Africa. It was agreed



**A delegate makes a point at the national women's workshop held in Durban in March this year.**

Photo: Afrapix



at this workshop that women must participate in organisations so that they could identify and address issues that face them as women. Meetings should be arranged at convenient times and child care should be provided at meetings so that women can be involved.

### **Political education and skills training**

The workshop noted that political education and skills training for women are very important. A good way for women to develop political skills is by participation and involvement at all levels in workshops and conferences, in South Africa and in other parts of the world. It was therefore seen as important that women fight for the right to participate at all levels of organisation. Other things that were seen as needing immediate attention were: organising rural women and white women, literacy campaigns for women,

the needs of returning exiles, the recent unbannings of organisations, and local initiatives in relation to the unbannings. The women also decided to start a campaign against high food prices, and to form peace committees in areas where they do not already exist.

### **Making their voices heard!**

Women are moving forward! Let us make sure that that women are on national executives in the present and the future. Let us make sure women are at the negotiating table. Let us make sure women are at the ANC conference in December. Let us make sure we are fighting the things that oppress women. The struggle for women's liberation is part of the struggle for a new non-racist, non-sexist democratic South Africa.



**Women are making their voices heard!**

Photo: Afrapix



# The Women

## **Preamble:**

We, the women of South Africa, wives and mothers, working women and housewives hereby declare our aim of striving for the removal of all laws, regulations, conventions and customs that discriminate against us as women.

## **A Single Society:**

We do not form a society separate from men. There is only one society, and it is made up of both women and men. As women we share the problems and anxieties of our men, and join hands with them to remove social evils and obstacles to progress.

## **Women's Lot:**

We women share with our menfolk the cares and anxieties imposed by poverty and its evils. As wives and mothers it falls upon us to make small wages stretch a long way. It is we who feel the cries of our children when they are hungry and sick. It is our lot to keep and care for the homes that are too small, broken and dirty to be kept clean.

We know the burden of looking after children and land when our husbands are away in the mines, on the farms, and in the towns earning our daily bread.

We know what it is to keep family life going in pondokkies and shanties, or in over-crowded one-room apartments. We know the bitterness of children taken to lawless ways, of daughters becoming unmarried mothers whilst still at school, of boys and girls growing up without education, training or jobs at a living wage.

## **Poor and Rich:**

These are the evils that need not exist. They exist because the society in which we live is divided into poor and rich into black and white. They exist because there are privileges for the few, discrimination and harsh treatment for the many. We women have stood and will stand shoulder to shoulder with our menfolk in a common struggle against poverty, race and class discrimination.

## **National Liberation:**

We march forward with our men in the struggle for liberation and the defence of the working people. We pledge ourselves to keep high the banner of equality, fraternity and liberty. As women there rests upon us also the burden of removing from our society all the social differences developed in past times between men and women, which have the effect of keeping our sex in a position of inferiority and subordination.

## **Equality for Women:**

We resolve to struggle for the removal of laws and customs that deny African women the right to own, inherit or alienate property. We resolve to work for a change in the laws of marriage such as are found amongst our African, Malay and Indian people, which have the effect of placing wives in the position of legal subjection to husbands, and giving husbands the power to dispose of wives' property and earnings, and dictate to them in all matters affecting them and their children.

## **Women Who Labour:**

Thousands of women are employed today in factories, homes, offices, shops; on farms and in professions as nurses, teachers and the like. As unmarried women, widows or divorcees they have to fend for themselves often without assistance of a male relative. Many of them are responsible not only for their own livelihood but also for that of their children.

Large numbers of women are in fact the sole breadwinners and heads of their families.

## **Forever Minors:**

Nevertheless, the laws and practices derived from an earlier and different state of society are still applied to them. They are responsible for their own person and their children. Yet the law seeks to enforce upon them the status of a minor.

Not only are African, Coloured and Indian women denied political rights, but they are also denied the same status as men in such matters



# s Charter

as the right to enter into contracts, to own or dispose of property, and to exercise guardianship over their children.

## **Obstacles to Progress:**

The law has lagged behind the development of society and it no longer corresponds to the actual social and economic position of women. The law has become an obstacle to progress of women, and therefore, a brake on the whole society.

This intolerable condition would not be allowed to continue were it not for the refusal of a large section of our menfolk to concede to us women the rights and privileges which they demand for themselves. We shall teach the men that they cannot hope to liberate themselves from the evils of discrimination and prejudice as long as they fail to extend to women complete and unqualified equality in law and practice.

## **Need for Education:**

We also recognise that large numbers of our womenfolk continue to be bound by traditional practices and conventions, and fail to realise that these have become obsolete and a brake on progress. It is our duty and privilege to enlist all women in our struggle for emancipation and to bring to them all realisation of the intimate relationship that exists between their status of inferiority as women and the inferior status to which their people are subjected by laws and prejudices.

It is our intention to carry out a nation-wide programme of education that will bring home to all South African men and women the realisation that freedom cannot be won for any one section, or for the people as a whole as long as we women are kept in bondage.

## **An Appeal:**

We appeal to all progressive organisations, to the churches, educational and welfare organisations, to all progressive men and women who have the interests of the people at heart, to join with us in this great and noble endeavour.

## **Our Aims:**

We declare the following aims:

This organisation is formed for the purpose of uniting women in common action for the removal of all political, legal, economic and social disabilities. We shall strive for women to obtain:

1. The right to vote and to be elected to all State bodies, without restriction or discrimination.
2. The right to full opportunities for employment with equal pay and possibilities of promotion in all spheres of work.
3. Equal rights with men in relation to property, marriage and children, and for the removal of all laws and customs that deny women such equal rights.
4. For the removal of all laws that restrict free movement, that prevent or hinder the right of free association and activity in democratic organisations, and the right to participate in the work of these organisations.
5. For the development of every child through free compulsory education for all; for the protection of mother and child through maternity homes, welfare clinics, creches and nursery schools, in countryside and town; through proper homes for all; and through provision of water, light, transport, sanitation and other amenities of modern civilisation.
6. To build and strengthen the organisation of women in trade unions and through the people's organisations.
7. To co-operate with all other organisations that have similar aims in South Africa as well as throughout the world.
8. To strive for permanent peace throughout the world.

*This is the charter that was adopted at the conference to launch the Federation of South African Women (Fedsaw) in 1954.*

*What do you think about the Women's Charter? Would you have ideas to add to it? Or things you disagree with? Share your ideas! Write to:  
SPEAK, P.O. Box 45213, Mayfair, 2018,  
Johannesburg.*



# SOLIDARITY WITH MOZAMBIQUE!

*For many years the people of Mozambique lived hard lives under Portuguese masters.*

*Many people worked on the farms of the Portuguese bosses where they were treated badly and they earned very little money. Most people had no say in the government. Children suffered with almost no education and no health care. In 1964 the oppressed people of Mozambique started fighting for their freedom under their organisation, Frelimo. It was a bitter war. But, in 1975*

*Frelimo won the war. The Frelimo government brought new life and new hope for Mozambicans. The people had great hope for building a society free of exploitation and oppression. But not everybody liked the idea of an equal society.*

*A rebel organisation outside of Mozambique, called the Mozambique National Resistance (MNR or Renamo) was formed to fight against the Frelimo government. There is evidence that the South African government has helped MNR bandits in this destruction process.*

*Today the bitter war goes on. Most Mozambicans live with the horror and uncertainty that war brings. A Mozambican solidarity group has been formed in South Africa to raise awareness amongst South Africans about what is happening in Mozambique.*



**Laura Maniquil says: "I am not afraid and I am no longer shy. The cooperative helped me do this."**

*Photo: Prabha Khosla*

## **A women's co-operative in Mozambique**

Prabha Khosla is a journalist in Mozambique. SPEAK asked her to write an article about a women's co-operative there. It is one of the many kinds of co-operatives in Mozambique that is able to exist despite the war. But as the war intensifies, more and more of Mozambicans' lives are affected by it.

Laura Maniquil, a Mozambican, and a member of the Filipe Samuel Magadia co-operative, told her story of building a co-operative with women.

She said: "Before the co-operative, I used to think that women were only for washing clothes and taking care of children. I did not know women could do anything. I never used to talk with anyone. I did not know how to talk with people. Now I can talk with anyone, even you, a journalist. I am not afraid and I am no longer shy. The co-operative helped me do this."



### **A peasant woman**

Laura, a peasant woman, is one of the 21 members of this all woman cooperative in Machava, on the outskirts of Maputo city. The co-operative is named after one of Mozambique's national heroes. Laura is 39 years old and has been with the co-operative since 1982.

### **An important history**

The co-operative has an important history. In 1982, a man turned up where Laura lives. He wanted to take her land. He said he had legal deed to it. Laura approached her local Grupo Dinamizador (Dynamizing Group) - a neighbourhood committee which helps to solve local problems. Unfortunately the Committee agreed with the man. So, she went to the district administrator with her problem.

### **A fight for land**

The administrator called a meeting of all parties concerned, but the man never showed up. In the meantime, the administrator had investigated the claim, and said that the man did not have a right to Laura's land. He encouraged her to start a co-operative with her neighbours to defend their land. She organised a meeting and 48 women responded. Many women at first demanded salaries for their collective labour, but Laura explained that there was no-one to pay wages, only their labour would bring them money to live on. Many women left, but others stayed

and built the co-operative.

### **Women together are strong**

Women continue to work together in their co-operative. They grow cassava, maize, onions, cabbage, lettuce, tomatoes, carrots and many other things, depending on the time of the year. They sell what they grow to people locally and in the city of Maputo. The cost of living is very high in Maputo. The profit the women get out of this is very small. But Laura feels that the gains they have made over the years are worth more than just money. She says, "As members of a co-operative we have learned to be leaders, make decisions collectively. We have learnt to count money, apply for and pay loans. We have also learnt to read and write and to be strong." These are some of the gains that have kept the co-operative going from 1982 to 1990.

### **Facing destruction**

Still, life is not well. It is not easy to live a normal life in Mozambique today. The destruction and killing by the "matsangas", a word people use to describe the MNR bandits, destabilises Mozambique. The peasants, who are the majority of the rural people, have suffered the most.

But eight years of hardship and struggle for survival have not dampened Laura's many dreams and hopes for her co-operative and herself. She had nine children, two of whom

Laura and other members of Filipe Samuel Magadia co-operative in a meeting.

Photo: Prabha Khosla





died. Now her eldest son has gone to work in South Africa like many Mozambicans who cannot stand the war. Laura has never been to South Africa, but she knows that her son is working in Soweto.

### **Laura' biggest dream**

One of Laura's biggest dreams is for the cooperative to have enough money. For that Mozambique needs to have a chance to build its economy and have peace. People in Mozambique need our support to stop this war.

.....

## ***Solidarity with the people of Mozambique!***

### ***Their struggle is our Struggle!***

There is an electrified fence 63 kilometres long that stretches between the Kruger National Park and the border of Swaziland. It separates part of South Africa from Mozambique. At least 90 people have been killed by contact with this fence in the past four years. Twelve people were killed at the fence in January 1990. Those who survive the fence have suffered serious burns and have even lost legs and arms. The fence was put up by the South African government. They claim they put the fence up to prevent ANC cadres from crossing into South Africa. But those who have died crossing the fence are Mozambican refugees, mainly women and children, risking their lives



**This is the electric fence that has killed so many Mozambican refugees who are desperate to escape the war in Mozambique.**

Photo: AIM/Afrapix



**The body of one of the 66 victims of the MNR train massacre in February this year. Mozambican army officials say that the rebels crossed the border from South African soil.**

Photo: AIM/Afrapix

to escape the war in their country. A war in which the South African government has had a big part to play. Now that the ANC is unbanned, why is the fence still there? The Bureau for Refugees, a division of the South African Bishop's Conference and Mosaic are campaigning to force the South African government to remove this fence that is killing so many refugees.

### **A massacre**

In February 1990, a train carrying hundreds of Mozambican miners from South Africa to their homes in Mozambique, was blown up near a town in Mozambique called Ressano Garcia. Seventy people were killed in the attack. One of those killed was a little girl who was on her way to visit family. When the train was blown up, people tried to get out to hide in the bush. There they were shot at by the MNR bandits, and some were murdered with bayonets. The train was blown up by MNR bandits, the rebel bandits in Mozambique who are at war with the government and the people of Mozambique. The train was blown up 12 kilometres from the South African border. Officers in the Mozambican army say that the rebels crossed the border from South African soil.



## **Taking the struggle forward**

The struggle for freedom in Mozambique and all the frontline states is part and parcel of the struggle for freedom in South Africa.

The Mozambique Solidarity Action Interim Committee (Mosaic) has been set up in Johannesburg. They say: "The massacre in February was only the latest in a series of rebel attacks which indicate that the MNR is still receiving support from inside South Africa. Recent revelations about the Civil Co-operation Bureau indicate that the State President, F.W. de Klerk, was unaware of the activities of this secret unit in the South African Defence Force. In the light of these facts, and given the upsurge of MNR brutality in Mozambique, we demand an official inquiry into whether there is also a secret unit in the SADF that supports MNR. We demand that the South African government use its resources and intelligence-gathering capabilities to identify and stop those groups that are still giving aid to the rebels. We support Nelson Mandela's call for legislation that will make it illegal for anyone in South Africa to give aid to the MNR." If you want to know more about solidarity work for Mozambique contact Mosaic at the Workers' Library (011) 337-8145 or the Association of Democratic Journalists at (011) 337-1931.

.....

### **Facts about the war in Mozambique**

*The Maputo Ministry of Information has some details of the effects of the MNR war against the people of Mozambique. Here are some of them:*

- \* 800 health posts and health centres in rural areas destroyed or sacked, leaving more than 2 million people without health care.*
  - \* 2 651 schools destroyed, 36 boarding schools and 4 teacher training centres destroyed*
  - \* 2 sugar factories destroyed*
  - \* more than 4 million Mozambicans have been left homeless and can no longer support themselves*
  - \* total damage is believed to be more than 12 billion South African rands.*
- There are huge food shortages, and many more babies are dying in their first year of life than before the MNR was formed.*

# **Comrade Ray**

## **- an unbreakable spirit!**

*Comrade Ray Alexander and her husband Jack Simons were the first ANC exiles to return to South Africa since the unbanning of the ANC and SACP.*

Comrade Ray is a busy woman, but she is always willing to fit people in her busy schedule. She has lived her life fighting for workers' rights, fighting for women's rights, and fighting for human rights. She is humble and warm. When Comrade Ray talks about her life as an organiser, she remembers things from many years ago as if they happened yesterday. SPEAK went to talk to Comrade Ray.

### **A communist, a fighter for woman's rights, and an organiser**

Talking to Comrade Ray is a very interesting experience. She talked about her life as a South African Communist Party member, a trade union organiser, and how she fought for a non-racial and non-sexist South Africa. When we asked her about the role she played in organising workers she said: "I began organising workers when I was working as a shop assistant in Cape Town. I organised the workers under the Shop Assistants Union." But she did not put her energy into only one union. "I helped to organise other workers. We used to wake up at 4 o'clock to get to the docks to organise stevedoring and railway workers," she said. She also helped to organise laundry workers.

### **A SACP mission**

Ray said: "In 1936 the Party asked me to go to Paarl to organise the unemployed workers. The hungry years of 1929 to 1935 were





**Comrade Ray talks about women as being the most exploited of the exploited. Her message to women is clear: Organise!**

Photo: Dynamic Images

beginning to have an effect. Then we organised unemployed workers to sign a petition which was presented in Cape Town demanding unemployment insurance.”

**An incident Comrade Ray will not forget**  
Comrade Ray remembers some of the dirty tricks that bosses used to play to hide exploitation in the factories. She said: “One Monday I went to a factory to meet workers I was organising. The foreman saw me coming to the factory with a briefcase. He thought that I was a factory inspector. He then quickly sent all the illegally employed 11 and 12 year old children out of the factory. I then heard them singing Ringa-Ringa-Roses. I thought this is a very advanced factory because I thought it had a child care centre or a play room for workers’ children. Meantime, the workers told me about the trick. So we organised to put an end to child labour and we succeeded.”

### **The mother of the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW)**

In one of the meetings that Comrade Ray has attended, Helen Joseph introduced her as the mother of FEDSAW. She said, “Ray had a dream of women in her mind. FEDSAW was her baby. We were just the midwives. We caught the baby and held it up.” When Ray spoke to us, this came across clearly. She said: “In

1953, Francis Baard, Florence Mafumela and I got together to discuss the idea of an organisation that would unite women of all races where ever they were to fight for a non-racial and non-sexist South Africa. We spoke to women in other regions about this idea and they liked it. This is how the idea of FEDSAW came about. We took up issues like the increase of bread price in the early fifties even before we launched the organisation. Wherever I went I spoke to women to join FEDSAW. Then I was banned at the end of October 1953. In fact when I was organising the bread campaign, friends and comrades were phoning to warn that I might be banned. But I said: ‘What is the use of being unbanned and do nothing?’”

### **Nothing could dampen Ray's spirit**

Many people were banned at the same time as Comrade Ray. The minister who was responsible for giving banning orders just put office stamps on instead of signing them. They fought those banning orders and won the case. Ray said: “I used that space to further organise FEDSAW. We had to finalise our Constitution. At the same time we worked on the Women’s Charter which laid down women’s demands. At the same time the ANC Western Cape people put me forward as a candidate to contest election. During those days black



people could vote. It was the first time a Communist Party member contested elections." Being banned did not dampen Comrade Ray's spirit. She continued organising workers and laying foundations for a non-racial non-sexist society. She said: "Our Women's Charter was drawn before the Freedom Charter. Some of the things in the Freedom Charter were borrowed from the Women's Charter."

### Organising women

In another meeting Comrade Ray said: "I have often been asked why I am so worried about organising women? Because women are the most exploited of the exploited. They work in the factories and then work in the home. Bosses use women as cheap labour. I have always heard 'you are very busy with your women'. Yes, I am busy with my women."

Ray's interest in women issues is clear when you talk to her. She talks about organising maternity benefits for women workers. She is indeed a fighter for women's rights.

### A message for South African women

"My message for South African women is clear," Comrade Ray said. "They must mobilise more and more women to struggle for democratic rights. They must give all the support to the ANC negotiating team to have a new South Africa. That is what we are after."



**A joyful reunion! Comrade Francis Beard welcomes Comrade Ray Alexander back home to South Africa after many years of exile!**

Photo: Afrapix

Women must also make sure they are represented at the negotiating table so that women's issues are not just left out. We do not just want to destroy apartheid, we want to have political power. Every man and woman must have the right to be the decision making centres of the government. Women must join their unions and grassroots organisations in the townships."

Comrade Ray's message echoes in our ears. We share this message with SPEAK readers: Let us all as South Africans take the challenge of organising and building a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic South Africa!



**Viva ANC! Viva SACP!  
And forward with women's liberation!  
Comrades Sister Bernard, Helen Joseph and Ray Alexander at International Women's Day in Johannesburg in March this year.**  
Photo: Dynamic Images



# My name is Irene

My name is Irene and I am 30 years old. I have three children and work as a domestic in Yeoville, Johannesburg.

I'm going to explain changes I went through as I was growing up to be a woman after completing school. My first job was at a supermarket in Newcastle. I was happy and satisfied. I was no longer a schoolgirl! My body was also changing. I started to ask many questions about myself. I found myself feeling things I have never felt before. Everything in my life had changed. Many boys started to beg me for love.

I was seventeen when I first fell in love. The whole world was just me and my boyfriend. I felt strong and proud of myself. I started to picture everything he promised me - our wedding day, our home and our family. I dreamed of being a mother of two boys and a girl.

It is a custom that a girl doesn't have a boyfriend before her parents meet him. We broke that custom. We spent time alone together. You can imagine what happened. We cut the cake before the wedding. Oh, to me it was like a dream. I knew it was wrong but I was so in love with him that I didn't care.

After a while I started to get headaches and feel very tired. My work was suffering. Then I realised that I was pregnant. "Something has happened," I said to my boyfriend. I was in a panic. "What will we do?" Our problem was that we were both scared of our parents. He promised to look after me. When I heard his words, I was no longer afraid. I had hope.

Now you will be sad if you heard what he said to his parents. He told them that he was not sure that the baby was his. Because he said he was not the only man I had slept with. How can you feel?

As for me, I was embarrassed. "How could you say such a bad thing?" I questioned him. He told me that he only did it because he was

scared of his parents. He saved himself but he described me as a rubbish.

As days passed I realised that he was not in love with me. How could we stay together? He had used me. He only wanted to taste and pass on. As these things became more and more clear to me, I told him to leave me in peace. I would bring up our baby without him with pleasure.

When his parents saw the baby they knew that it was theirs. Then they wanted our baby to stay with them. They also wanted us to get married. But I refused. I didn't want to forgive him. How could I?

Today that boyfriend of mine is still the same. He is changing girlfriends like the morning breakfast. It would have been a mistake for me to have married him. I decided to get work and live by myself with my own money.

I am telling the story because most young women of today are having the same problems. Women! You need always to be strong. Because you are the ones who get hurt. Don't allow your feelings to rule yourself. You must always take care of yourself. Don't allow yourself to be used. Tell yourself that you are the king of yourself. There are many ways that you can enjoy yourself. Read the books, and collect the facts. You can also write your own stories. Keep yourself happy. Don't allow your mind and heart to crack about a man.

*This story was written by Irene Mvelase. Irene is a member of the Progressive Arts Project (PAP) Women's Group in Johannesburg.*





# Dear Doctor

Dear SPEAK Doctor

I'm just trying to do a follow-up on SPEAK 23 where there was an article about pregnant women. I'm a mother of two boys, my first born is 11 years and the other one is 9 years old. Now I'm four months pregnant and I don't have problems except that I'm working as a domestic worker. I don't have enough rest, and my stomach is always full of wind. My doctor always says I must not worry about that. He says it is because the baby is growing inside. But it makes me feel uncomfortable, sometimes its very painful. Sometimes I am in need of something that I can take or drink. I need your help.

Doctor could you please send me all that books that can educate me about my pregnancy and what is going to happen to me. As I told you my last born is nearly ten years, and I have forgotten everything. Lastly, I want you to advise me about these two things that my friend advises me to use. Culzuba and the 'Gesondheiddruppels' and I don't understand for what good reason. Can you advise me?

Viva SPEAK Viva!

From your friend

Elizabeth

Port Elizabeth

Dear Elizabeth

Thank you for sharing this problem with us. Many women who get pregnant a long time after their last born forget what pregnancy is like. They feel as if they are pregnant for the first time again!

Your first question is about your stomach feeling full of wind. When you are pregnant, the acid from your stomach can move up towards your throat. This isn't serious but it can make you feel uncomfortable and give you pain. Ask your doctor or the chemist for an 'antacid' medicine. Or you can try drinking milk to see if that helps. As your womb grows bigger, this problem may get worse. But don't worry, it always gets better after the baby is born.

You say that you are a domestic worker and you feel tired. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, women often feel very tired in pregnancy, especially in the first four months. Secondly, a

domestic worker's job is often very hard. Talk to your employer and explain how you are feeling. Ask if you can rest on the bed for one or two hours in the afternoon. A letter from your doctor may make you feel better about asking.

And lastly, the advice that your friend gave you. I am not sure what the things are that she suggested you take. But what you should be taking are vitamin pills and iron medicine. Pregnant women should take iron and vitamins when they are pregnant. This keeps their blood strong and is good for the baby. You can get these pills from the hospital or clinic where you go for ante natal care. Or you can buy them from your chemist. Explain to the chemist what you want them for.

I wish you good luck with the rest of your pregnancy. If you want to read about pregnancy, look at the back copies of SPEAK numbers 17 - 25. If you do not have them, write to SPEAK, P.O. Box 45213, Mayfair, 2018, Johannesburg.

With best wishes

SPEAK Doctor

**Do you have a health problem? Write to the SPEAK Doctor. She will answer your letter. Remember to send an address with your letter so that she can reply to you. Send to: SPEAK, P.O. Box 45213, Mayfair, 2018, Johannesburg.**

***International Campaign 1990  
International day of action for women's  
health  
28 May 1990***

1990 is the third year that women all over the world have held meetings and demonstrations on May 28 to focus world attention on women's health. Each year thousands and thousands of women all over the world die as a result of pregnancy, in childbirth, and from backstreet abortions. The international campaign is an effort to focus special attention on the health issues that face women, especially in poor countries. Last year church women in South Africa held a focus on cancer of the cervix. Is your organisation responding to the call to women for action on May 28? Let us know!



# ***Understand AIDS!***

## ***and protect yourself and your loved ones.***

*The problem of AIDS is growing in South Africa. It is now more important than ever to understand what AIDS is all about, how serious a sickness AIDS is, and how to stop AIDS from spreading.*

### **What is AIDS?**

AIDS stands for 'Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.' It is caused by a tiny germ called the HIV virus.

### **Who gets AIDS?**

ANYONE can get AIDS. It does not make a difference if you are white, black, young or old, woman or man. It does not make a difference if you are a woman who has sex with men, or if you are a man who has sex with women or men. Anyone can get AIDS.

### **Is there a cure for AIDS?**

Doctors do not know how AIDS started. But they are worried because it is spreading to many people very fast in South Africa. And doctors cannot cure AIDS. Once you get AIDS you will die from it.

### **How can you tell if someone has AIDS?**

You cannot always tell if someone has AIDS. This is one of the reasons why many people do not take AIDS seriously. You can have the HIV virus in your blood for many years before you get sick. You may not know that you have the virus. You do not feel sick and you do not look sick. But if the HIV virus is in your blood, you are a carrier of AIDS. If you have sex with other people you can pass the germ to them and give them AIDS as well.

***Remember that a person who looks very healthy can have the HIV virus and can pass it on to you. You cannot tell who has AIDS just by looking at them.***

### **How does AIDS kill you?**

The HIV virus can stay in your blood for as long

as 14 years before you get the AIDS sickness. But sooner or later you will get sick and die. You may start to get thin and feel weak. You may get a very bad cough or diarrhoea. You may get a bad skin infection. The HIV virus makes your body weak so that you cannot fight these sicknesses any more. Once the AIDS sickness starts, you are going to die from it.

### **How do we get AIDS?**

The HIV virus lives in blood, in men's semen, and in women's vaginal discharge. These are the ways in which you can get AIDS:

#### ***You can get AIDS through having sex***

If you have sex with someone who has the HIV virus you are very likely to get the HIV virus. The HIV virus can pass from man to woman, woman to man, or man to man. The HIV virus is passed on in the same way as other sexual sicknesses, like syphilis or gonorrhoea - VD or 'the drop' as some people call them.

Not everybody who has sex with an HIV virus carrier will get AIDS. But you do not know who will and who won't. Some people are more likely to get AIDS through sex than other people. We call these people high risk people. These are the kind of people who are high risk:

- \* if you have sex with many different people, or if your partner has sex with many different people, your chances of getting the HIV virus is greater.
- \* if you have a sore on your sex parts, the HIV virus can more easily pass into your blood.
- \* if you have sex with the man's penis in your back passage, the skin inside the back passage breaks easily and the HIV virus gets into your body more easily.

#### ***Babies can get AIDS***

Mothers who have the HIV virus can pass it on to their babies while they are still in the womb. Some of these babies are born with the AIDS sickness. Other babies get the sickness after a



few months or a year. Half of the babies born to mothers who have AIDS will die from AIDS while they are still very young.

### ***You can get AIDS from having a blood transfusion***

If you lose a lot of blood, doctors may give you blood to save your life. If this blood comes from someone who has the HIV virus you can get AIDS. All the blood that is given for blood transfusions in South Africa is checked for the HIV virus. This means you are not likely to get AIDS from a blood transfusion in South Africa. But in poorer countries they cannot afford to check the blood. So AIDS can get passed in this way.

### ***Can you get AIDS by living with someone who has AIDS?***

The answer is NO! You will only get AIDS if you have sex with that person. You will not get AIDS by being a friend to someone with AIDS. You will not get AIDS from someone coughing on you, touching or kissing you, washing, eating or working with you. Bosses have no right to dismiss workers because they have AIDS.

### ***How can you find out if you have AIDS?***

You can have a blood test to check for the HIV virus. If the HIV virus is in your blood, you are 'HIV positive'. This means you can pass the HIV virus on to the people you have sex with. Or, if you are a woman, it means that you can pass



**In South Africa blood is tested for the HIV virus before it is used in blood transfusions.**

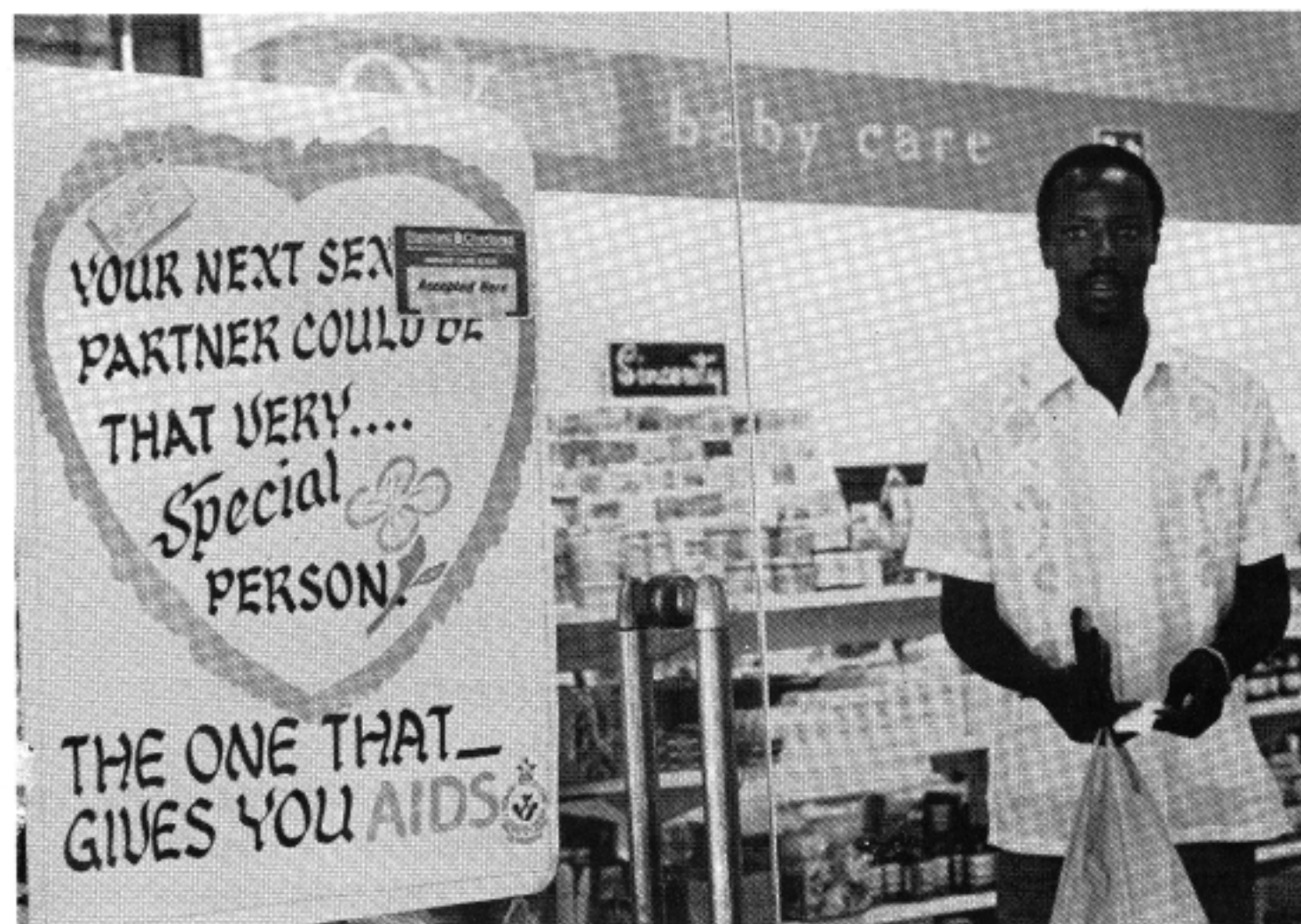
Photo: Afrapix

AIDS to your unborn baby. It means that sooner or later you will die from the AIDS sickness. If doctors or nurses are going to do an AIDS test on you, they must tell you about it first. Then they must explain the results clearly to you. It is your right as a patient to be told what is being done to you and why it is being done. AIDS is too serious an illness for you not to be told.

### ***How do you know if you need an AIDS test?***

If you feel sick and are very worried about AIDS, then talk to your doctor or clinic nurse. They can examine you and decide whether you need the test or not. You will feel better once you have shared your fears about AIDS with a caring health worker.

Sometimes people get worried about AIDS after they have had sex with someone they are not sure of. Women who have been raped are often frightened that they have AIDS. If you are worried about someone you slept with, share your worries with a caring doctor or nurse. But remember, it takes three months before the HIV



**Countries all over the world are trying to make people aware of AIDS. This photograph was taken outside a shop in Zimbabwe in 1989.**

Photo: Afrapix

virus shows in the blood. So if you are worried about someone you slept with, wait for three months before you have the test.

### **How can you stop yourself from getting AIDS?**

The number of people with the HIV virus in South Africa is still small. But more and more people get the HIV virus every day. It is important that each and every one of us takes extra care to protect ourselves. We can stop AIDS from spreading, and we can stop ourselves from getting AIDS. The way to do this is by having SAFE SEX.

### **What is safe sex?**

If you want to protect yourself from AIDS, these are some of the ways to practice safe sex:

- \* do not have sex with lots of people.
- \* try to talk openly with a new partner about the problem of AIDS.

### ***You can protect yourself from AIDS by using a condom when you have sex.***

\* always use a condom if you do not know your partner very well.

\* always use a condom if you know that your partner has sex with lots of people.

\* always use a condom if you have sex through your back passage.

\* always use a condom if you have sores on your sex parts. It is important that you go to the clinic or to a doctor to get your sores treated.

### **How do you use a condom?**

The condom must be put on the man's penis when his penis is hard. It must be put on before he enters his partner. You must leave space at the top of the condom to catch the sperm. The man must take his penis out of his partner before it gets too soft, otherwise the condom can come off inside and his sperm may spill out. Use a condom only once and throw it away after sex.

You can buy condoms from chemists or supermarkets. You can also get them free of

charge from family planning services and VD clinics. Do not feel shy about getting condoms, whether you are a man or a woman. Condoms can save your life and make you feel safe.

### **Will washing after sex stop the AIDS virus?**

Washing after sex will not stop you getting the AIDS virus. When you have had sex without a condom, the virus can get into your blood. Washing will not stop this from happening.

### **How can you help someone who has AIDS?**

As AIDS spreads in South Africa more and more of us will know someone who has the disease. It may be your friend, or your brother or sister. It may be your husband, or even your child. It may be you. How can we help someone who has AIDS? The most important thing is that we must go on loving them. They need your help and support now more than ever. The pain of knowing that you have AIDS is hard enough to bear. Just imagine if you had AIDS and all your friends and family reject you.



In our society, men see it as their right to do as they please. And women are expected to accept whatever men say. Most men take it as their right to sleep with many women. They think that



this is a sign of manhood. Most men also refuse to use condoms. We hear men saying things like: "How can you eat a sweet with a wrapper on." It is very difficult for a woman to convince a man who thinks like this to use condoms. Also, a woman may only have one sexual partner, but if he sleeps around and refuses to use a condom, she can get AIDS from him.

We need to organise. Women need to find ways of convincing men to use condoms. Men who do use condoms need to tell other men why using them is a good thing. Our lives and our health are too precious to play around with. Unless people use condoms, more and more of us will die from AIDS. Women must raise these issues in trade unions, civic organisations, women, youth, and political organisations.

Women and men must be educated. Women must educate male comrades, their boyfriends, husbands and children about AIDS.

### **We have to organise to fight AIDS**

AIDS, like all other diseases, is spread more easily where there is poverty and overcrowding. A hard life makes your body weak, so you cannot fight germs. We must fight to change the horrible conditions under which most people live. We have to organise. The first part of the fight against AIDS is to admit that AIDS is here.

In many countries, governments have refused to admit that they have AIDS in their country. They have felt ashamed about AIDS. And they also do not want tourists to stop coming to their country with money to spend. So even though whole villages of people have been killed by AIDS, some governments won't admit that there is an AIDS crisis in their country.

We in South Africa must not wait until our villages and townships are full of dying people. Organisations are giving attention to AIDS. The ANC is giving attention to AIDS. COSATU passed a resolution on AIDS at their last Congress in 1989.

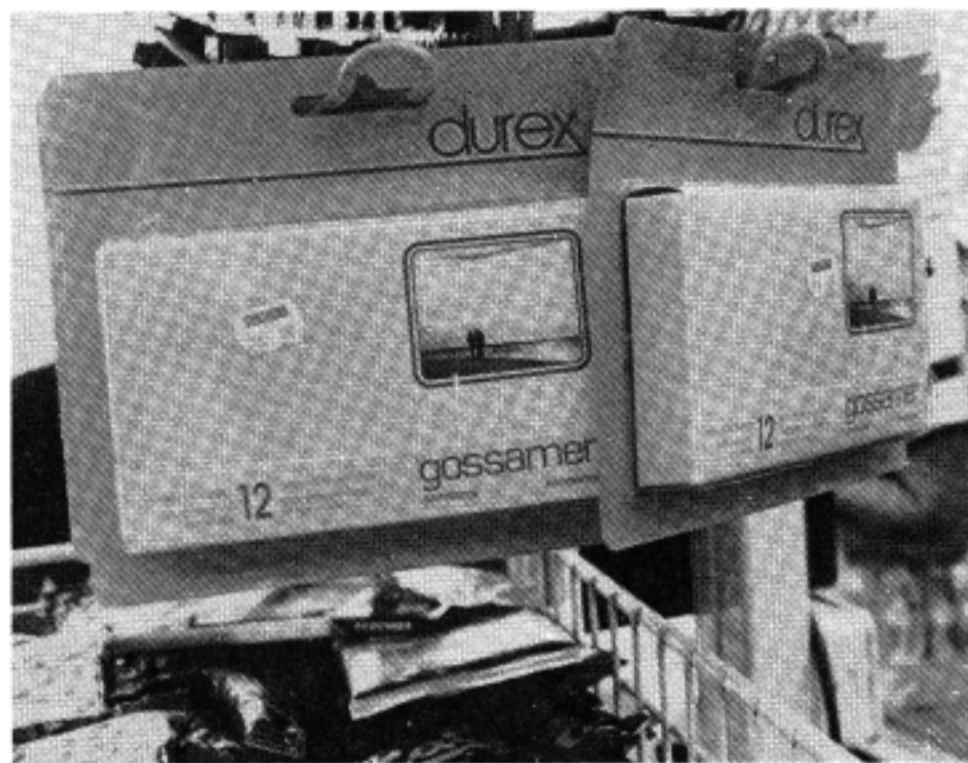
All organisations should take up AIDS education. It is up to us to understand what AIDS is all about so that we can protect ourselves, our loved ones, our friends and our comrades.

### **Organisations that help**

A lot of the information in this article comes from a booklet called 'AIDS - Everybodys' Problem', produced by The Workplace Information Group. If you want to get a copy of the booklet, write to: WIG, 6th Floor, Merchandise Centre, 350 Bree St, Johannesburg, 2001. Or phone (011) 402 5363.

If you want to contact an organisation that helps people with AIDS, write to: The Hospice Association, Box 87600, Houghton, Johannesburg, 2001. Or phone (011) 728 7023.

The Township AIDS Project can be contacted at Ipelegeng Community Centre, P.O. Box 1353, Southdale, 2135. Or phone (011) 982-5810 ext 206.



**You can buy condoms in chemists or supermarkets. You can also get them free of charge from family planning services and VD clinics. Remember, condoms can save your life.**

Photo: Afrapix



Namibian Women march on Independence Day making sure that their demands for a non-sexist Namibia are heard. Viva Namibian Women Viva!